

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 177601 TOSEC 080069

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SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL, SUNDAY, JULY 27, TITLED "THE HELSINKI SUMMIT".

2. IT'S A PITY THAT THE ADMINISTRATION CHOSE TO WAIT UNTIL THE EVE OF THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO HELSINKI TO START EXPLAINING WHAT HE AND 33 OTHER HEADS OF GOVERNMENT (PLUS THE POPE) WILL DO AT THE "CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE." FOR THE DELAY HAS GIVEN CRITICS OF THE AMERICAN ROLE--FORTUITOUSLY REINFORCED BY ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN--PRETTY MUCH AN OPEN FIELD TO CHARGE THAT THE EVENT WOULD MARK AN UNCOMPENSATED MORAL SELLOUT OF THE COUNTRIES AND PEOPLE UNDER KREMLIN RULE. THE UPSHOT HAS BEEN TO PUT THE ADMINISTRATION RATHER NEEDLESSLY ON THE DEFENSIVE AND TO DISTRACT ATTENTION FROM THOSE ASPECTS OF THE CONFERENCE THAT HOLD POTENTIAL VALUE FOR THE WEST.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 177601 TOSEC 080069

3. FOR YEARS, IN THE ABSENCE OF A GERMAN PEACE TREATY, THE

RUSSIANS HAD BEEN URGING THE WEST TO FORMALLY BLESS THEIR WORLD WAR II CONQUESTS. THEIR DESIRE GAVE THE WEST PART OF THE LEVERAGE IT NEEDED TO GET A DECENT BERLIN AGREEMENT OUT OF THE RUSSIANS IN 1969, AND TO INDUCE MOSCOW TO

ENTER SO-FAR UNPRODUCTIVE TALKS ON REDUCING EUROPEAN FORCE LEVELS. WHEN THE EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ACTUALLY OPENED TWO YEARS AGO, THE WESTERN COUNTRIES WERE FINALLY ABLE TO PRY OUT CERTAIN POLITICAL CONCESSIONS. IN RETURN FOR A DECLARATION THAT THE POSTWAR BORDERS ARE "INVOLABLE," MOSCOW AGREED THAT BORDERS CAN BE CHANGED BY AGREEMENT. IT ACCEPTED THE "CONFIDENCE-BUILDING" PRINCIPLE OF PROVIDING ADVANCE NOTICE OF MILITARY MANEUVERS NEAR ONE'S FRONTIER. AND IT AGREED TO ACCEPT INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS, AND TO BE MEASURED AGAINST THEM IN FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCES, FOR THE REUNION OF FAMILIES AND FOR MARRIAGES ACROSS THE EAST-WEST FRONTIER, FOR FREER TRAVEL AND CONTACTS, FOR GREATER MOBILITY OF JOURNALISTS, AND SO ON.

4. SINCE THE HELSINKI CONFERENCE WILL PRODUCE NOT A TREATY BUT SIMPLY A DECLARATION, NONE OF THESE THINGS IS BINDING OR ENFORCEABLE. THEY CONSTITUTE, AS MR. FORD SAID FRIDAY, "A POLITICAL DIALOGUE." BUT BY SIGNING THE DECLARATION, THE UNITED STATES YIELDS NOTHING IN PRACTICE OR SYMBOL THAT MOSCOW DID NOT ALREADY POSSESS. IT GAINS A FIRST FORMAL RUSSIAN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT BORDERS CAN ONLY BE CHANGED BY CONSENT. AND IT WINS GRUDGING SOVIET TOLERATION OF INTERNATIONAL "INTER-FERENCE" IN AREAS THAT MOSCOW HAS GUARDED AS EXCLUSIVELY DOMESTIC TERRAIN. AS FOR MR. SOLZHENITSYN'S ACCUSATION THAT THE PRESIDENT IS "BETRAYING" EAST EUROPE, IT MUST BE SET AGAINST THE PLAIN FACT THAT THE UNITED STATES INDUCED THE RUSSIANS TO SWALLOW, AT LEAST IN A LIMITED MEASURE, A PROCESS OF CONTACTS AND EXCHANGES BY WHICH SOME HOPE IN EAST EUROPE CAN BE SUSTAINED. THAT MR. FORD IS TO FOLLOW HIS SOJOURN IN HELSINKI WITH TRIPS TO THREE EAST EUROPEAN STATES DEMONSTRATES THAT AMERICAN INTEREST IN THAT REGION (AND ITS INTEREST IN AMERICA) IS VERY MUCH ALIVE.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 177601 TOSEC 080069

5. THE HELSINKI DECLARATION WILL DO SOMETHING ELSE: IT WILL MARK SOVIET CONSENT TO THE CONTINUED PARTICIPATION OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE AFFAIRS OF EUROPE. SUCH PARTICIPATION DOES NOT, TO BE SURE, DEPEND ON SOVIET CONSENT. BUT THERE IS SOME MODEST VALUE IN HAVING THE KREMLIN FORMALLY ACCEPT THAT THE UNITED STATES IS NOT A TRANSIENT PARTICIPANT: IMAGINE WHAT A CHANGE WOULD HAVE TO TAKE PLACE FOR, SAY, MOSCOW TO BE

FORMALLY ACCEPTED AS A PARTICIPANT IN THE INTER-AMERICAN
SYSTEM. IN FACT, THE SECURITY OF EUROPE IS SOMETHING
NO WESTERNER CAN TAKE FOR GRANTED, LEAST OF ALL AFTER
A GIANT POLITICAL CIRCUS IN WHICH MANY OF THE WEST
EUROPEANS PRESENT WILL PROBABLY FEEL OBLIGED BY THEIR

DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATIONS TO HAIL A NEW DAWN. WHAT
IS NEEDED, BEYOND FOLLOW-UPS ON THE RESULTS OF THIS
CONFERENCE, IS MEANINGFUL PROGRESS IN THE TALKS ABOUT
EUROPEAN FORCE LEVELS. BUT THAT NEED IS NOT BEING
CREATED BY THE HELSINKI SUMMIT. IT IS MERELY BEING
CONFIRMED. INGERSOLL

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